

rules provided in this paragraph (d) or examples provided in paragraph (e) of this section may not be used to establish any general rule permitting exclusion as a de minimis fringe. For example, the fact that \$252 (*i.e.*, \$21 per month for 12 months) worth of public transit passes can be excluded from gross income as a de minimis fringe in 1992 does not mean that any fringe benefit with a value equal to or less than \$252 may be excluded as a de minimis fringe. As another example, the fact that the commuting use of an employer-provided vehicle more than one day a month is an example of a benefit not excludable as a de minimis fringe (see paragraph (e)(2) of this section) does not mean that the commuting use of a vehicle up to 12 times per year is excludable from gross income as a de minimis fringe.

(4) *Benefits exceeding value and frequency limits.* If a benefit provided to an employee is not de minimis because either the value or frequency exceeds a limit provided in this paragraph (d), no amount of the benefit is considered to be a de minimis fringe. For example, if, in 1992, an employer provides a \$50 monthly public transit pass, the entire \$50 must be included in income, not just the excess value over \$21.

(e) *Examples—(1) Benefits excludable from income.* Examples of de minimis fringe benefits are occasional typing of personal letters by a company secretary; occasional personal use of an employer's copying machine, provided that the employer exercises sufficient control and imposes significant restrictions on the personal use of the machine so that at least 85 percent of the use of the machine is for business purposes; occasional cocktail parties, group meals, or picnics for employees and their guests; traditional birthday or holiday gifts of property (not cash) with a low fair market value; occasional theater or sporting event tickets; coffee, doughnuts, and soft drinks; local telephone calls; and flowers, fruit, books, or similar property provided to employees under special circumstances (e.g., on account of illness, outstanding performance, or family crisis).

(2) *Benefits not excludable as de minimis fringes.* Examples of fringe benefits

that are not excludable from gross income as de minimis fringes are: season tickets to sporting or theatrical events; the commuting use of an employer-provided automobile or other vehicle more than one day a month; membership in a private country club or athletic facility, regardless of the frequency with which the employee uses the facility; employer-provided group-term life insurance on the life of the spouse or child of an employee; and use of employer-owned or leased facilities (such as an apartment, hunting lodge, boat, etc.) for a weekend. Some amount of the value of certain of these fringe benefits may be excluded from income under other statutory provisions, such as the exclusion for working condition fringes. See § 1.132-5.

(f) *Nonapplicability of nondiscrimination rules.* Except to the extent provided in § 1.132-7, the nondiscrimination rules of section 132(h)(1) and § 1.132-8 do not apply in determining the amount, if any, of a de minimis fringe. Thus, a fringe benefit may be excludable as a de minimis fringe even if the benefit is provided exclusively to highly compensated employees of the employer.

[T.D. 8256, 54 FR 28615, July 6, 1989, as amended by T.D. 8389, 57 FR 1871, Jan 16, 1992; 57 FR 5982, Feb. 19, 1992]

§ 1.132-6T De minimis fringe—1985 through 1988 (temporary).

(a) *In general.* Gross income does not include the value of a de minimis fringe provided to an employee. The term "de minimis fringe" means any property or service the value of which is (after taking into account the frequency with which similar fringes are provided by the employer to the employer's employees) so small as to make accounting for it unreasonable or administratively impracticable.

(b) *Frequency.* Generally, the frequency with which similar fringes are provided by the employer to the employer's employees is determined by reference to the frequency with which the employer provides the fringe to each individual employee. For example, if an employer provides a free meal to one employee on a daily basis, but not to any other employee, the value of the meals is not de minimis with respect to that one employee even

though with respect to the employer's entire workforce the meals are provided "infrequently." However, where it would be administratively difficult to determine frequency with respect to individual employees, the frequency with which similar fringes are provided by the employer to the employer's employees is determined by reference to the frequency with which the employer provides the fringes to the employees and not the frequency with which individual employees receive them. In these cases, if an employer occasionally provides a fringe benefit of de minimis value to the employer's employees, the de minimis fringe exclusion may apply even though a particular employee receives the benefit frequently. For example, if an employer exercises sufficient control and imposes significant restrictions on the personal use of a company copying machine so that at least 85 percent of the use of the machine is for business purposes, any personal use of the copying machine by particular employees is considered to be a de minimis fringe.

(c) *Administrability.* Unless excluded by a statutory provision other than section 132(a)(4), the value of any fringe benefit that would not be unreasonable or administratively impracticable to account for must be included in the employee's gross income. Thus, except as otherwise provided in this section, the provision of any cash fringe benefit (or any fringe benefit provided to an employee through the use of a charge or credit card) is not excludable as a de minimis fringe. For example, the provision of cash to an employee for personal entertainment is not excludable as a de minimis fringe.

(d) *Special rules—(1) Transit passes.* A transit pass provided to an employee at a discount not exceeding \$15 per month may be excluded as a de minimis fringe. The exclusion provided in this paragraph (d) also applies to the provision of \$15 in tokens or fare cards that enable an individual to travel on the transit system. The exclusion provided in this paragraph (d) does not apply to any provision of cash or other benefit to defray transit expenses incurred for personal travel.

(2) *Occasional meal money or local transportation fare.* Occasional meal

money or local transportation fare provided to an employee because overtime work necessitates an extension of the employee's normal workday is excluded as a de minimis fringe.

(3) *Use of special rules to establish a general rule.* The special rules provided in this paragraph (d) may not be used to establish any general rule. For example, the fact that \$180 (\$15 per month for 12 months) worth of transit passes can be excluded in a year does not mean that any fringe benefit with a value equal to or less than \$180 may be excluded as a de minimis fringe.

(4) *Benefits exceeding value and frequency limitations.* If the benefit provided to an employee is not de minimis because either the value or frequency exceeds a limit provided in this paragraph (d), no amount of the benefit is considered to be de minimis. For example, if an employer provides a \$20 monthly transit pass, the entire \$20 must be included in income, not just the excess value over \$15.

(e) *Nonapplicability of nondiscrimination rules.* Except to the extent provided in §1.132-7T, the nondiscrimination rules of section 132(h)(1) and §1.132-8T do not apply. Thus, for example, a fringe benefit may be a de minimis fringe even if the benefit is provided exclusively to officers of the employer.

(f) *Examples—(1) Benefits excludable from income.* Examples of de minimis fringe benefits are occasional typing of personal letters by a company secretary; occasional personal use of an employer's copying machine, provided that the employer exercises sufficient control and imposes significant restrictions on the personal use of the machine so that at least 85 percent of the use of the machine is for business purposes; occasional cocktail parties or picnics for employees and their guests; traditional holiday gifts of property (not cash) with a low fair market value; occasional theatre or sporting event tickets; and coffee and doughnuts.

(2) *Benefits not excludable as de minimis fringes.* Examples of fringe benefits that are not excludable from income as de minimis fringes are: season tickets to sporting or theatrical events; the

commuting use of an employer-provided automobile or other vehicle more than once a month; membership in a private country club or athletic facility, regardless of the frequency with which the employee uses the facility; and use of employer-owned or leased facilities (such as an apartment, hunting lodge, boat, etc.) for a weekend. Some amount of the value of these fringe benefits may be excluded under other statutory provisions, such as the exclusion for working condition fringes. See § 1.132-5T.

[T.D. 8063, 50 FR 52308, Dec. 23, 1985, as amended by T.D. 8256, 54 FR 28600, July 6, 1989]

§ 1.132-7 Employer-operated eating facilities.

(a) *In general*—(1) *Condition for exclusion*—(i) *General rule.* The value of meals provided to employees at an employer-operated eating facility for employees is excludable from gross income as a de minimis fringe only if on an annual basis, the revenue from the facility equals or exceeds the direct operating costs of the facility.

(ii) *Additional condition for highly compensated employees.* With respect to any highly compensated employee, an exclusion is available under this section only if the condition set out in paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section is satisfied and access to the facility is available on substantially the same terms to each member of a group of employees that is defined under a reasonable classification set up by the employer that does not discriminate in favor of highly compensated employees. See § 1.132-8. For purposes of this paragraph (a)(1)(ii), each dining room or cafeteria in which meals are served is treated as a separate eating facility, whether each such dining room or cafeteria has its own kitchen or other food-preparation area.

(2) *Employer-operated eating facility for employees.* An employer-operated eating facility for employees is a facility that meets all of the following conditions—

- (i) The facility is owned or leased by the employer,
- (ii) The facility is operated by the employer,

(iii) The facility is located on or near the business premises of the employer, and

(iv) The meals furnished at the facility are provided during, or immediately before or after, the employee's workday.

For purposes of this section, the term "meals" means food, beverages, and related services provided at the facility. If an employer can reasonably determine the number of meals that are excludable from income by the recipient employees under section 119, the employer may, in determining whether the requirement of paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section is satisfied, disregard all costs and revenues attributable to such meals provided to such employees. If an employer can reasonably determine the number of meals received by volunteers who receive food and beverages at a hospital, free or at a discount, the employer may, in determining whether the requirement of paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section is satisfied, disregard all costs and revenues attributable to such meals provided to such volunteers. If an employer charges nonemployees a greater amount than employees, in determining whether the requirement of paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section is satisfied, the employer must disregard all costs and revenues attributable to such meals provided to such nonemployees.

(3) *Operation by the employer.* If an employer contracts with another to operate an eating facility for its employees, the facility is considered to be operated by the employer for purposes of this section. If an eating facility is operated by more than one employer, it is considered to be operated by each employer.

(4) *Example.* The provisions of this paragraph (a)(2) may be illustrated by the following example:

Example 1. Assume that a not-for-profit hospital system maintains cafeterias for the use of its employees and volunteers. Only the employees are charged for food service at the cafeteria and the policy of the hospital is to charge the employees only for the costs of food, beverage and labor directly attributable to the meal. Most of the cafeterias within the system furnish more free meals to volunteers than they serve paid meals to employees. For purposes of this paragraph, as long as the employer can accurately determine the number of meals received free or at